

Evers asks JFC to release \$3.75M annually to fight homelessness

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Gov. Tony Evers is asking the Joint Finance Committee to release \$3.75 million annually to fight the homeless problem.

The money would cover the costs of initiatives proposed by the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

The gov's letter comes a week after Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, raised concerns about the price tag for the proposals, which were also put into a package of bills that have cleared the Assembly. They have yet to be taken up by the Senate.

Evers included the homeless proposals in his budget, but Republicans pulled them while leaving the funding in the Joint Finance Committee.

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Thursday's letter notes his administration asked in July for the money to be released. Evers wrote his administration put in the request so soon after the budget was signed because he feared the money otherwise wouldn't be released in time to move forward with "these critical programs" before winter began.

"As snow has fallen and temperatures have continued to drop, my concern has only grown," Evers wrote.

Evers went on to note the Legislature doesn't plan to convene again before winter begins and JFC action would "stop this unnecessary delay."

The offices of the co-chairs didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The proposals range from creating more beds at emergency shelters to providing short-term grants to help with housing costs.

Fitzgerald told reporters last week his members were “all over the place” on the bills. He added it was a “pretty big price tag” and “I don’t know that we can get the votes to pass all of them. That’s a lot of spending.”

Read the letter:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/191114Letter.pdf>